

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VALLET 00591 251312Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7407

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0591

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MT, US
SUBJECT: MINTOFF INVITATION TO HABIB

REF: STATE 116892,

1. WE WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO SEE UNDER SECRETARY HABIB IN MALTA. HE IS BOTH THE LEVEL AND THE PERSONALITY TO GET ACROSS TO MINTOFF, MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN WE HAVE MANAGED TO DATE, THE CENTRAL PROBLEM INVOLVED; THAT IS, THAT HIS OWN POLICIES AND PRONOUNCEMENTS ARE MORE A HINDRANCE TO THE KIND OF GOOD RELATIONSHIP HE PROFESSES TO WANT WITH THE US THAN ANY RESERVE ON OUR PART.
 2. OUR ONLY QUESTION CONCERNS TIMING. THE DEPARTMENT'S CABLE PUTS IT WELL; THAT MINTOFF'S PURPOSE IS AT LEAST PARTLY TO INVOLVE US IN HIS POLITICAL-ECONOMIC GUARANTEE SCHEME AND THAT A HABIB VISIT SHOULD NOT WEAKEN OUR PRESENT POLICY OF PUTTING THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY ON MALTA'S EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS. WE WOULD ADD THE OBVIOUS; I.E. THAT BOTH WE AND OUR EUROPEAN FRIENDS TAKE CARE THAT WE NOT REACT TO MINTOFF'S REQUESTS AND DEMANDS IN WAYS THAT DETRACT FROM THE FACT THAT THE HARD ECONOMIC REALITIES OF 1979 AND THE CHANGED STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS FACING MINTOFF GIVE US MORE CARDS THIS TIME THAN DURING THE CELEBRATED CONFRONTATION WITH MINTOFF IN 1971-72.
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3. ITALY AND FRANCE HAVE THE BALL IN THEIR COURT IN THE CURRENT DIALOGUE WITH MINTOFF. THERE ALSO REMAINS ON THE RECORD ANOTHER MINTOFF ULTIMATUM; THIS ONE THAT ITALY AND FRANCE EITHER PRODUCE BY THE END OF JUNE OR LOSE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MALTA. WE THINK NEITHER SHOULD BLINK IN FACE OF THIS LATEST

THREAT AND WE DOUBT THEY WILL. BUT THE DEPARTMENT WILL PRESUMABLY WANT TO TOUCH BASE WITH AT LEAST THE ITALIANS AND WE THINK THE BRITISH AS WELL BEFORE ANY FINAL DECISION ON TIMING. WE THINK IT ALSO IMPORTANT THAT ANY VISIT HERE BE IN THE CONTEXT OF SOME BROADER AREA ITINERARY SO AS TO LIMIT WHAT WILL BE MINTOFF'S OBJECTIVE OF EXAGGERATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A SENIOR US VISIT HERE.

4. ALL THAT BEING SAID WE STILL FAVOR A VISIT AND RECOMMEND WE RESPOND THAT THE UNDER SECRETARY WOULD OF COURSE WELCOME AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE COURSE OF A FUTURE TRIP THROUGH THE AREA, THAT WHILE NO SUCH TRAVEL IS IMMEDIATELY ANTICIPATED WE WILL BE BACK IN TOUCH WHEN IT IS IN ORDER TO AGREE ON A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE DATE.

5. WE WOULD ADD THAT WE THINK THAT MESSAGE SHOULD BE CONVEYED HERE RATHER THAN VIA GAUCI IN WASHINGTON, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON TO REMIND THE GOM THAT IT HAS YET TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT ITS PROFESSED INTENTION TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT ITS INADEQUATE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN WASHINGTON. LAINGEN

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Message Attributes

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